

A Very Short Greek Grammar

Compiled by John W White

Grammar information obtained from **William H. Davis**, Beginner's Grammar of the Greek New Testament and **H. E. Dana and J. R. Mantey**, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament.

There is a place on the Internet that will give you some help. <http://www.bible-researcher.com/index.html>

Check <http://www.gracebiblechurch.us/bible.html> for parsed verses of the New Testament.

VERBS

TENSE: Fixes verbal action with regard to time and aspect.

A. Present: [P; pres]* Continuous action in the present. "I am washing." The action of the present tense may be represented by a **line** (-----) in the present.

B. Imperfect: [I; imp] Continuous action going on in past time. "I was washing." The action of the imperfect tense may be represented by a **line** (----->) in the past.

C. Future: [F; fut] Expresses action in the future. "I shall wash."

D. Aorist: [A; aor] Expresses action as a point and not over a period of time. "I washed" The action of the aorist tense may be represented by a **dot** (•). The aorist presents the action as attained. It states the fact of the action or event without regard to its duration. The dot can be very small, John 3:3 "Except a man **be born** [aorist passive] again, . . ."; or a very large dot, John 2:20 "It took forty-six years **to build** [aorist active] this temple,".

E. perfect: [R; per] Expresses the results of the action to continue to exist. "I have washed" The perfect tense may be represented by a **dot** and a **line** (•-----).

F. pluperfect: [U; plu] Expresses continuance of the completed state in past time up to a prescribed limit in the past. "I had washed" The Pluperfect tense may be represented by (<----->).

VOICE: This part of the verb relates the verbal action to the subject.

A. Active: [A; act] The active voice represents the subject as acting.

B. Middle: [M; mid] The middle voice represents the subject as acting with reference to himself.

C. Passive: [P; pas] The passive voice represents the subject as acted upon.

MOOD: The mood "present two viewpoints: That which is **actual** and that which is **possible**" "The **indicative** is the mood which denotes the verbal idea as actual." Dana p.166 The subjunctive, optative, and imperative are modes that express "potential."

A. Indicative: [I; ind] This mood is a mood of certainty with respect to the completion of the action of the verb. "I wash"

B. Subjunctive: [S; sub] This mood expresses the idea of probable completion of the action of the verb with the possibility of the action of the verb failing to be completed. "I may wash"

C. Optative: [O; opt] probable failure to happen. A Wish. "I hope to wash."

D. iMperative: [M; imp] This expresses a command or intention. "Let them wash."

iNfinitive: [N; infn] Verbal noun expressing purpose or limit of action. The infinitive implies the action a **potential**. The infinitive is a verbal substantive or noun not having a mood. 'The infinitive implies potential or possibly.

*The Genitive, Ablative, Locative, Instrumental, and Dative cases form prepositional phrases.

TEXT USED IN BIBLE STUDY TOOLS COMPUTER PROGRAM

Alphabet Key (For the text and grammar used in Bible Study Tools)

alpha, α = a	beta, β b	gamma, γ g	delta, δ d	epsilon, ε e	zeta, ζ z
eta, η n	theta, θ q	iota, ι l	kappa, κ k	lambda, λ l	mu, μ m
nu, ν v	xi, ξ x	omicron, ο o	pi, π p	rho, ρ r	sigma, σ, ζ s
tau, τ t	upsilon, υ u	phi, φ f	chi, χ c	psi, ψ y	omega, ω w

Other Keys: This is for the Text and Grammar files in **Bible Study Tools**.

TENSE: **pre** = present; **imp** = imperfect; **fut** = future; **aor** = aorist; **per** = perfect; **plu** = pluperfect

MOOD: **ind** = indicative; **sub** = subjunctive; **opt** = optative; **imp** = imperative;

CASE: **nom** = nominative; **gen** = genitive; **dat** = dative; **voc** = vocative; **acc** = accusative.

GENDER: **mas** = masculine; **fem** = feminine; **neu** = neuter.

OTHER: **conj** = conjunction; **prep** = preposition; **adj** = adjective; **artl** = article; **adv** = adverb;

part = particle; **Ptc** = participle

GREEK PREPOSITIONAL MEANS CLASSIFIED

Word Strong's	Direction	Position	Relation	Agency	Means	Cause	Association	Purpose
ἀνά 300	up	in, by						
ἀντί 473			In exchange for, instead of, for			Because of		
ἀπό 575	from		For	by		On account of		
διά 1223	through		For	by	through, by means of	because of		for the sake of
εἰς 1519	into, unto, to	in, among, upon	as, for, against, in respect to			because of		for the purpose of
ἐκ 1537	out of	On			by means of	because of		
ἐν 1722	into	in, on, at, among, within	against, after time of			because of	with	
ἐπί 1909	up to	upon, at, on, in, by, before, over	against, after time of			on account of		for
κατά 2596	along, down, Upon, throughout	down, from, upon, at, in, by, before	according to, with reference to					
μετά 3326			After				with	

παρά 3844	beyond, to the side of, from	beside, before	contrary to				with	
περί 4012	around, about		in behalf of, concerning, about				with	
πρό 4253		before						
πρός 4314	to, toward	at, on, beside	against, for, pertaining to		by means of	on account of	with	for
σύν 4862			besides				with	
ὑπέρ 5228	beyond	over, above	concerning, for, instead of, on behalf of					for the sake of
ὑπο 5259		under		by				

"Prepositional Means Classified" Page 114 "A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament" by H. E. Dana, J. R. Mantey

HELPFUL BOOKS

Gillespie, G. K. *The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament*. Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1903.

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William H. Davis. *Beginner's Grammar of the Greek New Testament*. New York: Harper, 1923.

Bruce M. Metzger. *Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek*. Princeton, New Jersey: Theological Book Agency, 1969.

DON'T OUTGREEK THE GREEK

By Harold J. Berry

Excerpts from "Take Heart" in Your Study; ΠΠΟΚΟΠΠΕ, Vol. VIII, No. 3, page 6;

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They say that a little bit of Greek is dangerous. Well, maybe being able to swim five yards is not too helpful, but I'd rather know how to swim five yards than not at all.

What I usually find is that by the time my students have gone through my Greek classes, they're not acting too authoritative about Greek. They realize that there are enough technicalities and exceptions to require some balance and caution as they study a Greek text.

All words take on a special significance when viewed in light of their context. Always be suspicious if a commentary you're using packs or loads a word with theological meaning and then traces it through the Bible and forces the context to fit that meaning. That's not the way any language works. There are certain basic meanings the word has, but it takes on additional shades of meaning in its context. The same kind of care should be used regarding tenses and conditional sentences.

Here are some tips and examples to help you avoid trouble when studying Greek texts:

WATCH YOUR WORDS

ἐκκλησία - commonly translated "church," but its basic meaning is "a called-out group. Only the context can reveal the kind of called-out group it is. (See Acts 19:32).

ἀγιάζω - "I sanctify." Word basically means "set apart." Be careful about loading it with theological significance and then forcing the passage to fit the word. Context must determine what the person or thing is set apart to.

τέλος or **τέλειος** and **τελειόω** - commonly translated "perfect." No word in Greek means "perfect" in the sense our English word does (without imperfection). Greek word refers to what is complete or has come to its end.

DON'T BE MORE TENSE THAN THE TENSES

Aorist - the name conveys the significance of the tense "without limits." Significance is "unlimited" or "undefined." Translating the aorist "once-for-all" may be defended from the context but not from the tense itself. Grammarians Dana & Mantey expressed it well: "The aorist signifies nothing as to completeness, but simply presents the action as attained. It states the fact of the action or event without regard to its duration" (Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, p.193).

Perfect - as the English word implies, this tense refers to that which has been perfected, or completed. The Greek tense refers to that which has been completed in the past with a continuing effect. Of these two aspects, the emphasis is on the continuing effect.

Some interpreters go beyond the significance of the perfect tense by extending its existing results into the future. All that can be defended about the perfect tense is that at *the time of speaking or writing* the continuing effect, or existing result, still stands. Whether it extends beyond this depends on the context, not the perfect tense.

BE CAUTIOUS WITH THE CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

FIRST CLASS - (εἰ with indicative in protasis; any mood or tense in the apodosis). Traditionally interpreted as "assumed true" and translated as "since" or "because" (*Essentials of New Testament Greek*, pp. 108-109).

More defensible to call this the construction of "simple condition"--last part of the statement is true if the first part is true, last part is false if the first part is false. Only context can determine if true or not--not the construction by itself (see James Boyer, "First Class Conditions: What Do They Mean?")

Grace Theological Journal, Spring, 1981.)

Example: "If he is studying, he will learn Greek."

(**My note:** Not all First Class Conditional phrases are TRUE.)

Matthew 12:27 "And if (since) I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges."

Matthew 26:39 "O my Father, if (since) it be possible, let this cup pass from me: . . ."

1 Cor 15:32 ". . . if (since) the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die."

John 10:37 "If [since] I do not the works of my Father, believe me not."

Here is a first class conditional that is true: Romans 11:16 For **if** the firstfruit *be* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*; and **if** the root *be* holy, so *are* the branches.)

SECOND CLASS - (εἰ with indicative in protasis; an with indicative in apodosis). Contrary to fact. Little debate about this conditional sentence structure.

Example: "If he had studied. he would have learned Greek."

THIRD CLASS - (εἰάν with subjunctive in the protasis; any mood or tense in the apodosis).

Traditionally interpreted as "probable future" (*Essentials of New Testament Greek*, p.109).

More defensible to call this the construction of "uncertainty" (see James Boyer, "Third (and Fourth) Class Conditions," *Grace Theological Journal*, Fall, 1982.)

Example: "If he studies, he will learn Greek."

To translate the third class conditional sentence as "If, and you probably will; would make the last five verses of 1 John contradict themselves. (1 John 1:6-10 are all third-class conditional sentences.)

v.6; "If we say that we are having fellowship..."

v.7; "But if in the light we are walking..."

v.8; "If we say that we have not sinned..."

v.9; "If we are confessing our sins..."

v.10 "If we say that we have not sinned..."

ΑΙΩΝΙΟΣ

by S. S. Craig 1916

Dualism of Eternal life.

The Latin Vulgate translated the Greek adjective αἰώνιος to the Latin *aeternus* in which we get the English word eternal and eternity.

The KJV translators instead of going back to the original Greek and translating the Greek adjective αἰώνιος, went to the Latin Vulgate and translated the Latin *aeternus*. This is why the word eternal has been misunderstood by the English reader. If they would have gone to the Greek they for sure would have translated it as many translators such as Rotherham and Young, namely, age lasting or life for the age (εἰς τον αἰώνιος).

It is equally a fact that the theology of the West was not that of the Greek Church but that of Roman Catholicism. It was Latin theology. And just as it is beyond doubt that the revisers,

translators, and lexicographers, were chiefly influenced by the Latin language and Latin translations. It is admitted that the theology of Calvin was derived from Saint Augustine, modernized and extended.

“It was absolutely essential to Augustinian theology with its blighting emphasis on **the doctrine of predestinarianism** to mistranslate the Greek **adjective** αἰώνιος, and put on it a meaning which the Greek will not for a moment allow in its respective applications to salvation and judgment.

And that was essential to Augustinian theology was equally essential to Latin Christianity from the days of Augustine to those of Calvin and Luther. And the same exists in the Reformed Theology from then till the present.

To say nothing of other words, the Calvinist simply cannot, dare not, face an honest and truthful interpretation of the two frequently occurring words with which we are now dealing with, namely “eternal life.”

(**My note:** New Testament eternity is expressed in the phrase εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων found in Galatians 1:5 and not in a single Greek word. Translated “unto to the ages of/from the ages.” Some other examples are found in Philippians 4:20; 1 Timothy 1:17; 2 Timothy 4:18 Hebrews 13:21; 1 Peter 4:11.)